

It was therefore with considerable interest that I received from Mr. I. J. Ferguson-Lees the wing of a Carrion-Crow exhibiting this condition, which had been shot at Cotheridge, Worcestershire, on 17th March, 1955, sex not recorded, and sent to him by Mr. A. J. Harthan. This wing is generally of a brownish shade (as is often the case with the aberrant Rooks), and there is a wide brownish-white bar extending across both webs of most of the primaries, secondaries and greater wing coverts. These bars are sub-terminal being situated some 5–7 mm. from the tip of the feather.

This wing is additionally interesting in that the date the bird was shot precludes the possibility of it being juvenile. This fact coupled with the stage of growth of the feather suggests that it was a bird in first summer plumage. All aberrant specimens of the Rook obtained so far have been juveniles, and there has previously been only circumstantial evidence to suggest that the condition can persist beyond the juvenile stage.

Mr. A. J. Harthan states (*in litt*) that on 24th March, 1940, he trapped 5 Jackdaws (*Corvus monedula spermologus* Vieillot) and one Rook with similar brown colouring on wings, back and tail feathers; these feathers had paler markings but not anywhere near white. Mr. I. J. Ferguson-Lees informs me (*in litt*) that he saw a dead Crow, similar to the 1955 Worcestershire bird, at Clophill, Bedfordshire, in mid-March 1945. All these must have been at least one year old.

A word of warning on the subject of aberrant brown-plumaged birds may not be out of place. It is well known fact amongst aviculturists that a diet deficiency in the nestling stage can often result in a juvenile Corvine bird having brown plumage to a lesser or greater extent, these birds usually moult out the normal colour. Mr. Derek Goodwin informs me that this condition is of quite common occurrence in the Jackdaw, the birds usually appearing a unicolorous brown. It is safe to assume that the same remarks apply to other normally black-plumaged members of the Corvidae. There is a record (*Zoologist* 1885: 349) of a Carrion Crow of a warm umber-brown colour which was seen by Mr. J. Marshall in a taxidermists; no doubt this bird had suffered from a diet deficiency. When dealing with such aberrant birds care must be taken not to confuse the two conditions. Generally speaking the less common aberration takes the form of regular barring of a grey or whitish-brown shade; whilst birds suffering from a diet deficiency are normally a brownish shade all over with mottling, if present at all, in a slighter lighter shade of the same brown.

The races of Whyte's Barbet

by MR. C. W. BENSON

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I have had access to all the material of Whyte's Barbet *Buccanodon whytii* Sharpe, in the British Museum and in the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo. I am also grateful to Dr. G. Rudebeck and Dr. J. M. Winterbottom for loan of the material in the Transvaal and South African Museums respectively.

In *B. w. stresemanni* Grote, and *B. w. buttoni* White, the brown feathers of the back and mantle tend to be more markedly tipped with white than in the southern races. Also, on the whole they are rather more distinctly

glossy blue-black rather than blackish slate on the nape, throat and upper chest, while in Southern Rhodesia wing-measurements tend to be rather long. But it is in the colour of the crown and forehead, and cheek-stripe, that geographical variation is most clearly marked, and on this basis I propose the following arrangement of races:

Buccanodon whytii sowerbyi (Sharpe).

Stactolaema sowerbyi Sharpe, Bull. B.O.C., 7, 1898, p. 36: Fort Chiquaqua, 18 miles E.S.E. of Salisbury (see "Ibis", 1898, pp. 568, 572).

Crown and forehead wholly pale yellow; cheek-stripe white. Wing 95 mm. in two specimens from Southern Rhodesia; wing 90-96, average 92.3 mm., in remainder from further north.

Range: Fort Chiquaqua and Mazoe, north-eastern Southern Rhodesia; in eastern Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, plateau country between Nyasa/Shire and Luangwa Rifts, from Dedza and Fort Jameson north to the Mukutu Mts. at approx $10^{\circ} 30' S.$, $33^{\circ} 30' E.$

Material: British Museum, 17; Bulawayo Museum, 6; Transvaal Museum, 4; South African Museum, 1.

Buccanodon whytii irwini, new race.

Differs from *B. w. sowerbyi* Sharpe in having only the sides of the crown and forehead wholly pale yellow, the centre being blackish slate with only inconspicuous tipping of pale yellow; cheek-stripe white. Wing 92-98, average 95.5 mm.

Range: Eastern Southern Rhodesia, Melssetter to Inyanga and north-west to Rusape and Macheke ($18^{\circ} 10' S.$, $31^{\circ} 52' E.$).

Type: ♂. Rusape, Southern Rhodesia: $18^{\circ} 32' S.$, $32^{\circ} 07' E.$ 24th May 1953. Collected by Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin. Collector's No. R4/16. In the National Museum, Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia. N.M. Reg. No. 12284.

Measurements of Type: Wing 98, tail 55, culmen from base 20mm.

Material: British Museum, 3; Bulawayo Museum, 11; South African Museum, 2.

Remarks: Named after the collector. I must also point out that it was Mr. R. H. N. Smithers who first drew my attention to the difference between *B. w. sowerbyi* and *B. w. irwini*. That Nyasaland and eastern Northern Rhodesia birds should be *B. w. sowerbyi*, while further south in Southern Rhodesia there should be a distinct race, is most extraordinary, because the two populations are separated by the low-lying Zambesi Valley, where it is unlikely that *B. w. sowerbyi* occurs. Moreover, there appears to be no barrier between *B. w. sowerbyi* and *B. w. irwini*. However, the situation is no more remarkable than in *Arizelocichla milanensis* (Shelley), which occurs in the highlands of eastern Southern Rhodesia and at Mlanje, southern Nyasaland as *A. m. milanensis*. But a short distance to the west of Mlanje, at Cholo and near Blantyre, it is replaced by *A. m. striifacies* (Reichw. and Neum.). Except for four specimens in the British Museum showing some tendency towards *B. w. irwini*, the northern series of twenty-six are exactly like the type of *B. w. sowerbyi*, in the British Museum. And the only other specimen of *B. w. sowerbyi* from Southern Rhodesia, at Mazoe, $17^{\circ} S.$, $31^{\circ} 50' E.$, also in the British Museum, seems slightly intermediate, having rather pronounced slaty towards the base of the yellow feathers on the centre of the crown and forehead. But it is more like *B. w. sowerbyi* than *B. w. irwini*. The difference between *B. w. sowerbyi* and *B. w. irwini*, however,

is so relatively constant that it would be wrong not to recognise it by name. Captain C. H. B. Grant agrees.

Buccanodon whytii whytii (Shelley)

Smilorhis whytii Shelley, "Ibis", 1893, p. 11: Zomba, Nyasaland. Whole crown and forehead blackish slate, conspicuously and finely spotted with white; cheek-stripe white. Wing 90-95, average 92.5 mm.

Range: Southern Nyasaland east of the Nyasa/Shire Rift, from Mlanje and Blantyre to Mangoche.

Material: British Museum, 13

Remarks: Plate I, "Ibis", 1893 shows the characters of this race well, which are constant in all specimens. Separated from *B. w. sowerbyi* by hot, low-lying country in the Zambesi and Shire Valleys.

Buccanodon whytii stresemanni Grote.

Buccanodon anchietae stresemanni Grote, O.M., 1934, p. 86: Kitungulu, south end of Lake Tanganyika.

Crown and forehead as in *B. w. sowerbyi*, but cheek-stripe pale yellow. Wing 90-94, average 91.6 mm.

Range: North-eastern Northern Rhodesia and south-western Tanganyika Territory, from Mporokoso, Luwingu, and Kasama to Isoka, Tunduma and Sumbawanga.

Material: British Museum, 8, Bulawayo Museum, 12

Remarks: Characters constant in all specimens. There is no geographical barrier between *B. w. stresemanni* and *B. w. sowerbyi*. Intergrades should be sought for in the Karonga district, northern Nyasaland, where I have seen the species, but failed to obtain specimens.

Buccanodon whytii buttoni White

Buccanodon sowerbyi buttoni White, Bull. B.O.C., 65, 1945, p. 18: Ndola, Northern Rhodesia.

Crown and forehead as in *B. w. irwini*, but centre darker, bluish black rather than blackish slate; cheek-stripe pale yellow. Wing 90-93 mm.

Range: Ndola and Kawambwa, Northern Rhodesia.

Material: British Museum, 1; Bulawayo Museum, 2.

Remarks: As already indicated, the difference in the colour of the nape of the crown and forehead from *B. w. irwini*, is also apparent on the nape, throat and upper chest. *B. w. buttoni* should intergrade with *B. w. stresemanni* between Kawambwa and Mporokoso/Luwingu.

General Remark: It is clear that *Buccanodon anchietae* Bocage is specifically distinct from *B. whytii*, *B. a. katangae* Vincent and *B. w. buttoni* overlapping at Ndola, see White, Bull. B.O.C. 65, 1945, p. 18. But although I have examined a specimen of *B. a. katangae* in the South African Museum from further east, in the Serenje district, and it has also been obtained by Major W. E. Poles and myself on the south-east side of the Bangweulu swamps, at approx. 11° 40' S., 30° 40' E., there is no evidence that *B. w. stresemanni* overlaps with *B. a. katangae*.

P.S. Dr. H. Schouteden has also shown me in the Congo Museum, Tervuren, two specimens of *B. w. sowerbyi* from Salisbury and Marandellas, wings 92.5, 95 mm.; and three of *B. w. irwini* from Wedza, wings 93, 94, 97 mm. These specimens show the difference between the two races quite well. They were collected by Captain C. D. Priest, except that from Salisbury, by D. Townley.